



Dear Senators,

The Vermont Chamber is supportive of the creation of a statewide short-term rental (STR) registry as outlined in S.79, and we are urging the Senate to pass this important piece of legislation. The Legislature has taken progressive actions (most recently Act 10 in 2018) to regulate the STR market in Vermont, and we see a rental registry as the next step in the progression.

Vermont's licensed lodging properties have been public health partners as we worked to combat the pandemic. As a result of pandemic-related restrictions, the lodging industry has been operating at severely depressed business levels for well over a year now. Both STRs and licensed lodging properties provide overnight accommodations for the traveling public, yet they do not operate on a level playing field. As the lodging industry works to emerge from the pandemic, the long-anticipated establishment of a registry has added another glimmer of hope and equity.

While STRs contribute positively to Vermont's economy, they operate in a relatively unregulated environment. The pandemic has put a fine point on what can happen during a public health crisis when unlicensed properties providing overnight accommodations are anonymous and state officials do not have the means to contact them. Registration would be a necessary first step to improve communications and would also provide data if the State chose to enforce health and safety regulations in the future. The foundation set by establishing a STR registry would be a positive step forward to ensure a safe rental environment and move towards equity in the lodging marketplace.

The Vermont Chamber represents hundreds of lodging properties throughout the state, and we support S.79 as does the Vermont Short Term Rental Alliance. The hospitality industry is a major economic contributor to the state through employment, tax revenue and downtown vitality. We urge you to support this industry and the other housing programs aimed to improve safety and accessibility by approving this legislation.

We appreciate the continued dialogue and efforts to pursue safe overnight accommodations for the traveling public and create an equitable environment for Vermont's licensed lodging properties.

Sincerely,

Amy Spear
Vice President of Tourism